

All Resources in Development Projects at

Change from Microsoft Excel to the PLANTA Process

Sure, you can start important projects on demand and manage them without standardized plans. Yamaichi Electronics had enough of that manner and switched to a project and portfolio management system. Now, every project is better planned and the managers know exactly who has to do what and when.

Yamaichi Electronics, a Japanese manufacturer of electromechanical electronic components, optimizes its development, customer, and change projects – also in the course of individual customer development – with the project and project portfolio management system provided by PLANTA. Yamaichi Electronics provides several sectors like industry, automotive, semiconductors, and medical technology with its plug connectors. Yamaichi Electronics' particular challenge: keep an overview in the face of numerous projects, since individual resources are planned in up to 25 projects simultaneously.

In the research centers in Munich, Germany, and Sousse, Tunisia, as well as at the production site in Frankfurt/Oder, Germany, PLANTA software assists approx. 10 project managers/multi-project managers in project planning and controlling. The following systems are used: PLANTA Project, PLANTA Portfolio and PLANTA Customizer. Individual reports and a module for profitability analysis were created by means of adjustments. There is something peculiar about Yamaichi's resource planning: in order to ensure an optimum utilization of test devices, such devices are planned as skill resources in projects as well. Projects for mass products are planned with priority in the Connector Solutions area. The typical project duration is 6-24 months. More than 100 employees from the core areas of distribution, product management, and engineering are involved in these projects. Production takes place in Yamaichi's own factory or in external factories (focus on Asia). There are approximately 60 to 70 development projects running simultaneously. Individual products are developed in the Test Solutions area in about 250 projects per year. Here, the

typical project duration is 6-8 weeks.

Easy Project Management Without Adherence to Approval Process

Before the implementation of PLANTA Project, projects were planned with Microsoft Excel and a simple CRM system. Only simple



le project management was possible. There were no standardized date and resource plans in Excel or OpenProj. Projects were controlled via checklists and open items in Excel. The strategic direction of the portfolio was defined in "road map meetings" with the com-

pany management. Portfolio management was done in "priority meetings" on the basis of an Excel list. Urgent matters had priority while little consideration was given to other projects. Since the software made it easy to bypass the approval process, projects could be started on call. The project manager was regarded as a "booster" in the first place.

Objectives or Desires of a PM Software Implementation?

By implementing the PM software of Karlsruhe-based software company PLANTA, Yamaichi Electronics expected to see the following improvements:

Better predictability of the project portfolio development (dates, costs, quality). Better predictability of single projects (dates, costs, quality). Improved project lead times. More professional handling of projects due to improved project management. More efficient use of resources – also test devices – in individual projects as well as in the portfolio (by prioritization). Better realization of defined project processes. More effective project selection with respect to realizability of the company strategy. More effective project selection with respect to the question of "How can I achieve optimal turnover from the resources available?"

Rollout

Nine months passed from kickoff to definition and realization of adjustments to rollout and migration of all projects including subprojects to PLANTA: the rollout for the Connector Solutions area took from April 2014 to January 2015.



Implementation of Process Model Solves All Problems

The Excel templates were replaced. Now each development project is carried out in PLANTA by the same standards with schedule, checklist, and process model. The development resources are planned, the prioritization is done on the basis of resource planning and commercial details in PLANTA and in the future also with objective value contribution and risk values.

Matthias Möst (project manager for Connector Solutions at Yamaichi Electronics) describes the benefits of the software implementation as follows:

“The implementation of the PLANTA project approval process is one of the greatest improvements. All projects are started with adherence to the same rules (idea – proposal – project). This process is sustained continuously and can no longer be bypassed. The sales force creates an idea with all information required to make further decisions. The product manager decides whether it is a “reasonable” idea and all information is really available. He/she then turns the idea into a proposal. The decision whether a proposal is turned into a project and when it is to be launched is decided on the basis of check criteria. Before the approval of the project, no hours are worked for the project (no work reporting).”

Yamaichi Electronics Conclusion: Actually Achieved Objectives

Better realization of defined project processes. Improved project management and therefore a more professional handling of projects. More efficient use of resources in individual projects as well as in the portfolio (by prioritization). Better predictability of single projects (dates, costs, quality). Separation by ideas, proposals, and projects was a real milestone. Resource planning is continuously implemented. All project planning is done in one program.

Extract of List of Customers

PLANTA customers come from a wide range of economic sectors. These are primarily: IT, banks, and insurance companies, engineering and plant construction, as well as automobile manufacturers and suppliers.



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